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CASE STUDY

Nichiha | Case Study

BRR Architecture

KUM & GO STORE #0979 IN ROCK SPRINGS, WY

In the competitive convenience store market, brand consistency goes a long way. So when Kum & Go, the Iowa-based convenience store chain, set out to build 23 new stores featuring their new Marketplace design concept in 2016, they knew they needed to do two things: differentiate their stores in the market and do so with a unique look that would be readily recognizable and easily repeated.

“Everything about our new Marketplace design is different—both inside and out,” said Todd Felger, architectural design manager for Kum & Go. “We wanted to take things to the next level, so our new store designs feature contemporary exteriors with wood accents—all from Nichiha.”

Kum & Go already operates more than 400 stores in 11 states, so healthy growth is nothing new. But most of their previous prototypical stores featured brick exteriors.

“From our early development of the Marketplace design concepts, we knew that we wanted a fiber cement exterior,” said Felger. “We wanted a certain look, and we wanted to move to a different cladding material because of the labor involved with brick. So we did some research, and BRR Architecture brought the Nichiha material to our attention. Then Nichiha’s region manager came to Des Moines and built mock-up panels to show us what the products could do.”

Kum & Go wanted a material that would brighten their exteriors, and because some Nichiha products can be pre-finished, they could have any color they wanted. They chose 16-inch Illumination panels painted Sherwin Williams Eider White, accented by a stripe around the building with panels painted Repose Gray. Then they added a warm accent of VintageWood panels in cedar.

PROJECT DETAILS

Architect: BRR Architecture

Contractor: Hudspeth & Associates

Location
Rock Springs, WY

Product
Nichiha Illumination & VintageWood



Challenge

Kum & Go operates in 11 states and is building more than one store each month, so speed is important but so is consistency. They wanted a repeatable look, something they could use across all new stores to provide consistency in their exterior design. They also wanted a product that could be installed on all stores at all locations.

Solution

Although Kum & Go can’t always use the same contractor, the Nichiha system is easy to install; local contractors can follow the installation video instructions on Nichiha’s website. Plus, both Illumination and VintageWood panels use the same rainscreen system, making installation even simpler.

Results

Kum & Go chose Illumination panels prefinished in custom colors, so every store matches their unique brand, regardless of location. Prefinishing also saves their contractors time at the jobsite, allowing Kum & Go to focus on more important things—like growing their business.



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“Nichiha prefinished the panels so we eliminated the painting aspect of construction,” said Felger. “Having the finish factory-applied in a controlled environment removes the variability of jobsite conditions and we eliminate painting expense. Siding trades also have lower hourly rates than masonry; it’s much simpler without multiple subcontractors. ”

Felger added, “Plus with Nichiha, we’re not required to “tent the building” or use propane heaters in the winter months to keep it warm. You can install Nichiha in all types of weather, even when your fingers can’t move, which describes most Midwest winters.”

While looks matter, so does performance, said Felger. “Weather, wind loading and durability are always a consideration. Our stores get a lot of traffic, so we needed siding that will stand up over time. Nichiha has been a durable material for us.”

Moisture management is also important to Kum & Go, and Felger said they appreciate that Nichiha comes as an engineered system. “Their rain screen means we don’t have to rely on caulk joints at every panel; moisture management takes place behind the siding. Plus, Nichiha comes as a complete system, built to be installed a certain way with all the fasteners, rails and brackets. We don’t need to make things up as we go, which is so important as we build these stores across the 11 states where we do business. Our contractors follow Nichiha’s instructions, which are simple and easy to understand.”

As a fast growing company, simplicity matters. “Ease of installation, prefinished colors... these are huge pluses for us in terms of the repeatability of it all,” said Felger. “We have a prototypical design for a reason; we want to build multiple stores in multiple markets. If we build five stores, they’re all going to look alike. If you take one piece of Nichiha panel and hold it up against another store, it’s a perfect match. It’s nice that we can rely on that consistency, which allows us to move on to other things.”

Felger added, “Kum & Go will be building about 25 to 30 stores a year in the future, and Nichiha will be part of that growth. They’re a great partner.”



“WE WANTED CONSISTENCY, SO AS PEOPLE ARE DRIVING DOWN THE ROAD, THEY CAN SAY ‘OH, THERE’S A KUM & GO; WE KNOW WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE AND WE KNOW WHAT WE CAN EXPECT INSIDE THAT STORE.’ NICHIBA GIVES US THAT BRAND CONSISTENCY.”
— TODD FELGER, Kum & Go

About Nichiha USA:

Nichiha U.S.A., Inc., a subsidiary of Nichiha Corporation, was established 1998 and is headquartered in Norcross, Ga. Nichiha Corporation, an international leader in fiber cement technology for more than 35 years, has 13 plants worldwide and markets distinct patterns of fiber cement siding products in the U.S. In 2007, Nichiha opened its first U.S. manufacturing plant in Macon, Ga., responding to an increase in demand for fiber cement products in the Southeast market. For more information, call 1.86.NICHHA1 or visit nichiha.com



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